

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3099
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CINCPAC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2179

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, LA
SUBJECT: SITUATION IN BAN HOUEI SAI

1. IN A TALK WITH FONMIN PHOUMI VONGVICHIT ON MARCH 27
I RAISED THE SITUATION IN BAN HOUEI SAI AND WAS ASSURED
BY PHOUMI THAT THE PGNU WOULD TAKE STEPS TO RESTORE ORDER
SO THAT USAID ACTIVITIES COULD BE RESUMED THERE.

2. I TOLD PHOUMI I HAD DISCUSSED THE BAN HOUEI SAI
SITUATION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND I WENT OVER THE
EVENTS WHICH HAD TRANSPIRED COMMENCING WITH THE FAREWELL
PARTY FOR AREA COORDINATOR HUXTABLE. I DEPICTED THE
PROBLEM AS BEING CAUSED BY SEVERAL SO-CALLED STUDENTS
WHOSE MILITANCY DID NOT APPEAR TO ME TO BE IN LINE
WITH THE POLICIES OF THE PGNU. I SAID THAT THERE
APPEARED TO BE A REAL STATE OF ANARCHY IN BAN HOUEI
SAI AND THAT OUR LAO EMPLOYEES HAD EVEN REPORTED
THAT THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR HAD GONE TO THE AIRPORT
WITH THE STUDENT LEADERS TO MEETHU DELEGATION AND
HAD BEEN HEARD SHOUTING "DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM"

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AND SIMILAR SLOGANS. PHOUMI REMARKED JOKINGLY THAT

IT SOUNDED AS THOUGH THIS INDIVIDUAL WAS A MEMBER OF THE LPF. I ANSWERED THAT THESE SLOGANS WERE CERTAINLY OFTEN USED BY LPF PROPAGANDISTS BUT THAT THIS KIND OF NONSENSE DID NOT ACCORD WITH THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP WHICH HE AND I HAD BEEN TRYING TO BRING ABOUT.

3. PHOUMI SAID THAT BAN HOUEI SAI HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT THE CABINET MEETING THE DAY BEFORE AS THERE WAS CONCERN THAT FILIPINOS OF OB HOSPITAL MIGHT WITHDRAW. HE SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT BAN HOUEI SAI BE RETURNED TO NORMALCY AND EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT DRKHIS INCIDENT HAD COME TO PASS AS HE HAD HEARD THAT THE AMERICANS WERE BEING MOST HELPFUL IN PONNECTION WITH REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND OTHER MATTERS. HE ASKED WHETHER HEAVY LIBATIONS OF LAO-LAO HAD NOT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EXCITEMENT. I SAID THAT CLEARLY THERE HAD BEEN DRINKING AT THE PARTY BUT THE BEHAVIOR OF THE ARMED STUDENTS IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE THREATS TO OUR PERSONNEL SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

4. PHOUMI SAID THAT HE WOULD SEND A MESSAGE TO PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG IN SAM NEUA SO THAT HE COULD INSTRUCT PATHET LAO PERSONNEL, IF THERE ARE ANY IN THE AREA, TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE TO RE-ESTABLISH ORDER. I ANSWERED THAT THERE CLEARLY WAS PATHET LAO PERSONNEL IN THE AREA AND THAT ANYTHING THAT COULD BE DONE TO MAKE THE SO-CALLED STUDENTS REALIZE THAT THEIR ACTIONS WERE AGAINST PGNU POLICY WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL.

5. COMMENT: I AM ENCOURAGED BY PHOUMI'S ATTITUDE WITH REGARD TO THIS INCIDENT. HE COULD HAVE TAKEN THE LINE THAT PASSIONS RUN HIGH IN THE AFTERMATH OF A WAR AND THAT THIS KIND OF THING WAS UNDERSTANDABLE, ETC. ETC. THE FACT THAT HE DID NOT AND THAT HE SHOWED REAL CONCERN REGARDING THE PROBLEM CONFIRMS MY VIEW THAT THE SITUATION IS NOT ONE THAT WAS PROVOKED

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BY THE PATHET LAO LEADERSHIP, AND THAT FOR THE TIME BEING THE PGNU WISHES OUR PROGRAMS TO CONTINUE AS BEFORE.
WHITEHOUSE

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